



STORY OF SWARAJYA

(Part II)



National Book Trust, India

NEHRU BAL PUSTAKALAYA-20

STORY OF SWARAJYA

(Part II)

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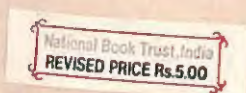
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VANDE MATARAM!

It was the year 1921 and Gandhiji had launched the movement for non-cooperation. The streets of Benaras were crowded. Thousands and thousands of people defiantly shouting 'Long Live Gandhi!' and 'Vande Mataram!' surged forward in a huge procession. Two years earlier, in 1919, the massacre of Jallianwala Bagh had taken place. Unarmed men, women and children had been shot down in cold blood. The Government's cruelty, however, continued unabated. As news of these brutalities spread the people's anger was roused. Now the rage in their voices seemed to rock the sky. Suddenly the police charged with *lathis*. They beat up people and began making arrests. In the crowd was a young boy, barely thirteen or fourteen years old, who was shouting 'Vande Mataram!' loudly and enthusiastically. The police arrested him too.

This young boy's name was Chandrashekhar. But when he was brought before a magistrate and asked his name, he answered proudly, "Azad"—free.

He was stripped and flogged. Each time the lash came down on his bare back he winced with pain but shouted the words 'Vande Mataram!' till at last he fell down in a dead faint.

That first flogging really freed the boy, for ever after that the severest hardships and torture had no effect on him.

You have already read in Part I of *The Story of Swarajya* how Bengal had been partitioned in 1905 and how this division had greatly angered the people.

One result of the Partition of Bengal was that the influence of the leaders who believed in the goodwill of the British began to decline. Leaders like Lokamanya Tilak, Lala Lajpat Rai and Bipin Chandra Pal, who advocated revolt

and revolution against the foreign rulers, had become very popular and the activities of revolutionaries who believed in violence and in killing British officers known for their cruelty began to increase. The British, therefore, began a strong campaign of repression. One by one all the top leaders were imprisoned. This led to a storm of protest all over the country. So on the occasion of King George V's coronation at the Delhi Durbar in 1911 to pacify the people the Government set aside the partition of Bengal.

In 1914, World War I broke out. This war lasted four years. India had to contribute heavily to meet its cost. Some Indians gave money willingly, but large sums were also extracted by force. Prices rose sharply and food began to cost three to four times more than before.

Indian revolutionaries tried to take advantage of the situation created by the war. Revolutionary leaders like Lala Hardayal, Raja Mahendra Pratap Singh and Obeidullah, who were in Europe at that time, began to make plans to supply arms secretly to their sympathisers in India. In the United States some Punjabis had already formed the Ghadr Party. A secret campaign was begun to enrol Indians outside India as members of this revolutionary group. Money was collected to buy arms abroad which were then sent to revolutionaries in Bengal and Punjab.

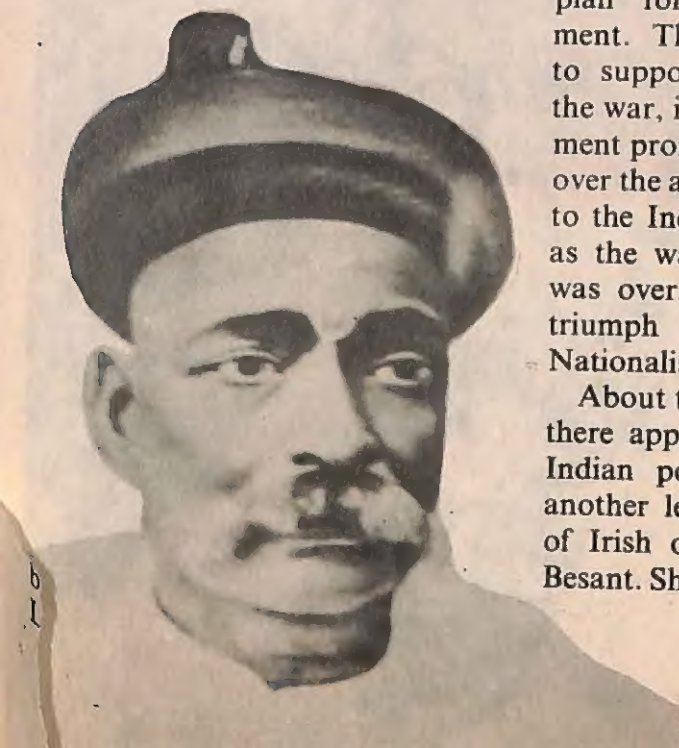
A revolution against the British in India was planned for February 1915. The leaders behind this move were Rashbehari Bose and Jatin Mukherjee. With the outbreak of the war, the strength of the army in India had been greatly reduced as contingent after contingent was sent abroad. Very few British soldiers were left in India. The revolutionary leaders felt that this was the ideal moment for

action. But the Government had already received information about the conspiracy. They arrested most of the revolutionaries in Punjab and Bengal and tortured and punished them severely. The revolution ended in failure. Jatin Mukherjee died fighting, while Rashbehari Bose escaped to Japan. As the brutality of the Government increased, the anger of the people mounted.

Then came the session of the Indian National Congress held at Lucknow in 1916. At the time the Congress was divided into two groups, the Moderates and the Extremists. The Extremists were led by Bal Gangadhar Tilak, affectionately called 'Lokamanya' which means 'honoured by the world'. Under his influence, Hindu and Muslim leaders Lokamanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak

jointly put forward a plan for self-government. They promised to support Britain in the war, if the Government promised to hand over the administration to the Indians as soon as the war in Europe was over. This was a triumph for the Nationalists.

About the same time there appeared on the Indian political scene another leader, a lady of Irish origin, Annie Besant. She loved India



and was a great admirer of the religions and philosophy of our country. She formed an organisation called the Home Rule League to press for Home Rule for India. Tilak had established a similar organisation. Annie Besant toured the country to plead the cause of self-rule. The Nationalists felt greatly encouraged that the Home Rule movement for India had been started by a woman from the British Isles.

Annie Besant



By 1917 the war in Europe had already lasted three years and the British had suffered many reverses. Meanwhile, the demand for Swaraj had gained strength. The Government tried its best to curb the growing influence of Tilak and Annie Besant but with little effect.

In August 1917, the British Government announced that it would give Indians some share in the administration. This did not fully satisfy the Nationalists but it somewhat cooled their anger.

World War I ended in 1918. The British were victorious. Although the scheme offering Indians a share in the administration had caused disappointment, the Nationalists decided that every concession was a step forward.

THE ROWLATT ACT AND THE JALLIANWALA BAGH MASSACRE

The British in India were angry with the people for the trouble the Nationalists and the revolutionaries had caused them while the war was on. To suppress the activities of the revolutionaries, they passed the Rowlatt Act. This Act gave the administration power to detain people in prison without trial. Naturally, the entire country united in opposing the Rowlatt Act which came to be known as the 'Black Act'.

In 1914, Gandhiji returned from South Africa where he had successfully used the weapon of non-violence and *satyagraha*. He now began to persuade the people in India to use the same weapon in their struggle for freedom. What does *satyagraha* mean? It means that you must have no fear of the oppressor, that you must always stand up firmly for your rights and that you must not hit back even when struck. By the use of this weapon Gandhiji wanted to awaken

the conscience of the British.

Many people laughed at Gandhiji. They said that this was no way to fight the might of the British. But, Gandhiji argued, that this was how he had fought the injustice suffered by Indians in South Africa. He had collected an army of *satyagrahis* who had cheerfully faced police batons and without protest gone to jail. The authorities had been astounded to see unarmed *satyagrahis* bravely resisting violence without any sign of fear.

Gandhiji had returned to India while the war in Europe was still on. With the help of some people who believed in his movement of *satyagraha*, he opened a Satyagraha ashram in Ahmedabad which later became famous as the Sabarmati Ashram.

Gandhiji decided to use the new weapon of *satyagraha* against the might of the British Government in India. His first experiment was in the Champaran district of Bihar. The European indigo-planters there were ill-treating their tenant farmers. When Gandhiji heard of this he went to Champaran to fight for the rights of the farmers. The Government ordered him to leave the district. He refused to do so and was arrested. This happened on April 18, 1917. When tried by a court of law—incidentally this was the first of his several trials—he pleaded guilty. He told the court that he could not obey the order of the Government because he believed in a Power which was much greater than the Government.

The Indian Government was aware of Gandhiji's success in South Africa. It did not want to provoke the people by imprisoning him. He was, therefore, set free. Gandhiji toured the entire area to find out for himself what the farmers'



Satyagraha Ashram

grievances were. The Government eventually acted on his findings and suggestions and framed laws to prevent the farmers from being exploited and oppressed.

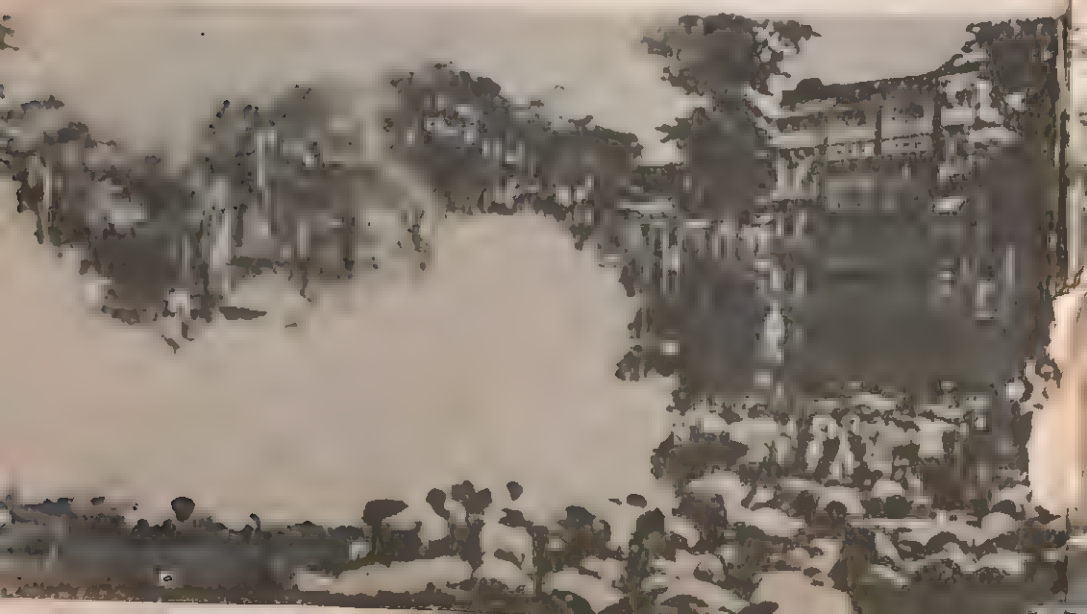
Thus the weapon of *satyagraha* had proved successful. But it had been so far used only on a minor issue. Gandhiji had yet to try it on an issue which would involve the whole country. The passing of the Rowlatt Act gave him this opportunity. With a few of his followers Gandhiji decided to launch a countrywide *satyagraha* to oppose the Act. To obtain the support of the entire country, he asked Indians to observe a fast on April 6, and hold meetings everywhere to voice their opposition to the 'Black Act'. April 6 was to be Satyagraha Day.

A wave of enthusiasm swept through the country. But the people forgot Gandhiji's plea that they should keep calm even

when greatly provoked. Excitement mounted and people became unruly. The police opened fire on the crowds. Some were killed; many were wounded. This happened in several Indian cities. The severity of the Government measures increased, particularly in Punjab where the Government was most afraid of an uprising. During the war Punjab had supplied the largest number of recruits to the Indian Army whose valour and bravery on the field of battle had even impressed the people of Europe. The British Government, however, did not want to encourage and praise the Indian soldier. They were afraid that if the Indian soldier asked for equality with the British soldier, the Nationalists in India would take advantage of this demand. They, therefore, arrested all the top leaders in Punjab.

This angered the people more. Meetings were held which attracted large crowds, and when the Punjab Government took still harsher measures, the crowds got out of control, took revenge on the English and damaged valuable Govern-

Police use teargas on the mob



ment property.

And then came the terrible massacre of Jallianwala Bagh.

On April 13, the day of the Baisakhi festival, a meeting was being held on the grounds of Jallianwala Bagh in Amritsar. There were about 20,000 people at the meeting, all unarmed. Amongst them were old men, women and children. A British officer, General Dyer, arrived with 100 Indian and 50 British troops. Without any warning and without giving the meeting a chance to disperse, Dyer ordered his troops to open fire. It appeared as though the General had come to Jallianwala Bagh determined to shoot down innocent people and opportunity had favoured him. The Jallianwala Bagh ground was surrounded on all sides by the high walls of houses and had only one very narrow exit. This was so narrow that General Dyer had not been able to bring his armoured vehicle inside. The guns blazed away as the crowd tried helplessly to escape. But where could they go? The firing stopped only when there was no ammunition left.

By then 1,600 rounds had been fired. Hundreds of people had been killed and thousands wounded. But what was even worse was that sentries were posted all through the night and no one was allowed to remove the dead or tend the wounded.

But more was yet to follow. The British officers seemed to lose their heads completely in their wish to crush Punjab. Indians were subjected to unspeakable hardships for weeks.

All communication with the rest of the country was ordered to be cut off so that

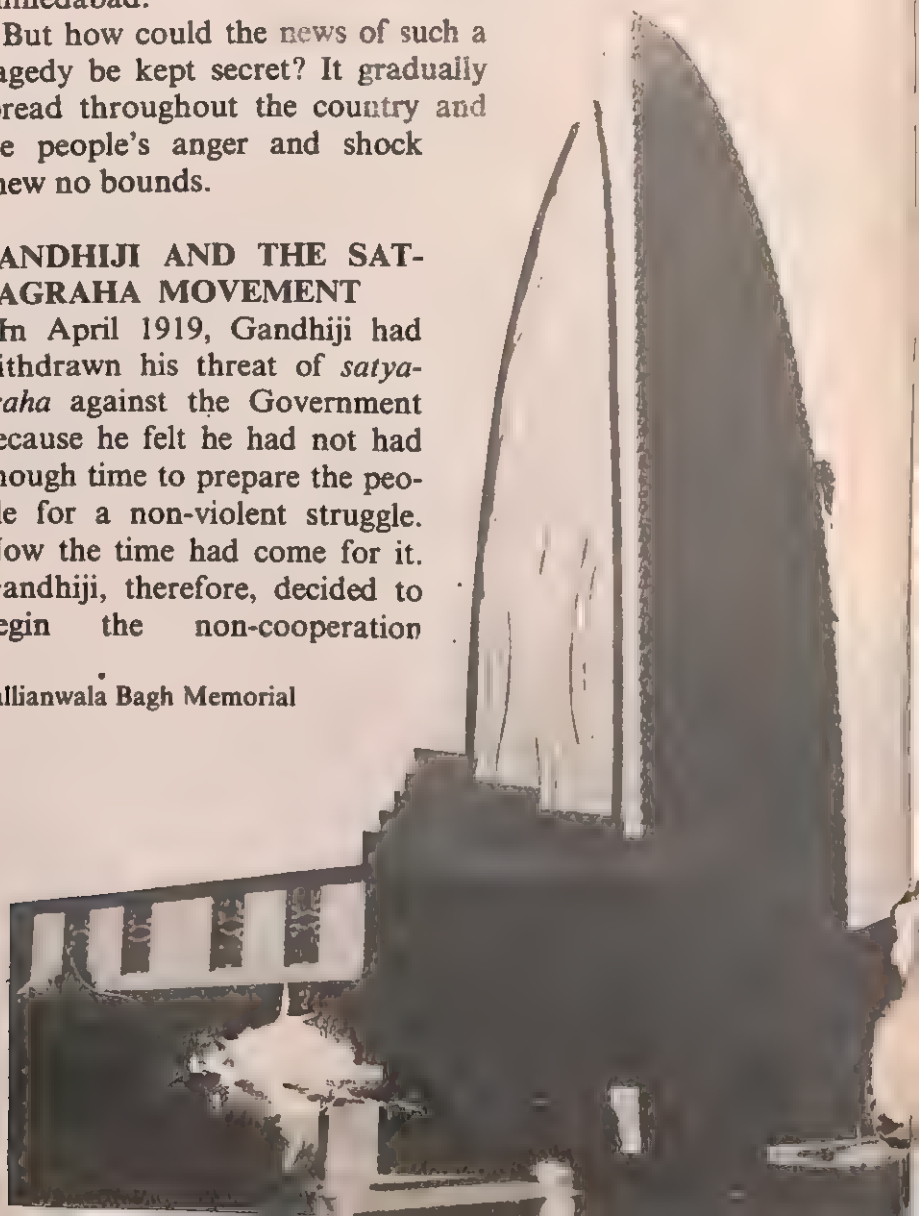
news of the massacre would not leak out. Under strict Government orders no one was allowed to enter or leave the province. When Gandhiji tried to go to Punjab he was arrested at Delhi and sent back to Ahmedabad.

But how could the news of such a tragedy be kept secret? It gradually spread throughout the country and the people's anger and shock knew no bounds.

GANDHIJI AND THE SATYAGRAHA MOVEMENT

In April 1919, Gandhiji had withdrawn his threat of *satyagraha* against the Government because he felt he had not had enough time to prepare the people for a non-violent struggle. Now the time had come for it. Gandhiji, therefore, decided to begin the non-cooperation

Jallianwala Bagh Memorial



movement. The Congress had already elected him its leader in 1920 after the loss of its much loved leader, Lokamanya Tilak who had died recently. Just when the country was mourning Tilak's death, it received new hope in the person of Gandhiji.

Once again a wave of enthusiasm swept the country. People were filled with a desire to do their share for India. If necessary, they were willing to sacrifice themselves to secure the freedom of the country.

Sarfaroshi ki tammanna ab hamare dil men hai

Dekhna hai zor kitna bazu-e-quatil men hai

The urge to lay down our lives is now in our hearts.

Come let us see how much strength the enemy has.

On the advice of their leaders, thousands of students left their schools and colleges and joined the fight for freedom or enrolled themselves in the national schools and *vidyapiths* that had just been started. Many lawyers gave up their practice and took a pledge to serve the nation. Among them were eminent lawyers like Motilal Nehru and Chittaranjan Das. Younger men like Jawaharlal Nehru, who had lived in luxury, gave up their comfortable life and went round the villages campaigning for non-cooperation. Following Gandhiji, people boycotted the elections to the assemblies, which had been formed by the Government to give the Indians some share in ruling the country.

Gandhiji called on the people to boycott foreign cloth. This was a great blow to the British textile industry because most of the cloth used in India was imported from England and the export of cloth to India was a very large and profitable source of income. In answer to Gandhiji's call, women and children went round collecting foreign cloth and making

huge bonfires of it in the open streets. Gandhiji took to wearing a *khadi kurta* and *dhoti* and an ordinary white cap instead of the usual turban on his head. This cap came to be known as the 'Gandhi cap'. *Khadi*, at that time was not the fine, snow-white material we see today. All nationalists, however, began using coarse, thick *khadi*, thus doing away with the distinction between the rich and the poor.

Gandhiji was overjoyed by the response and enthusiasm of the people and he promised *Swarajya* within a year if the



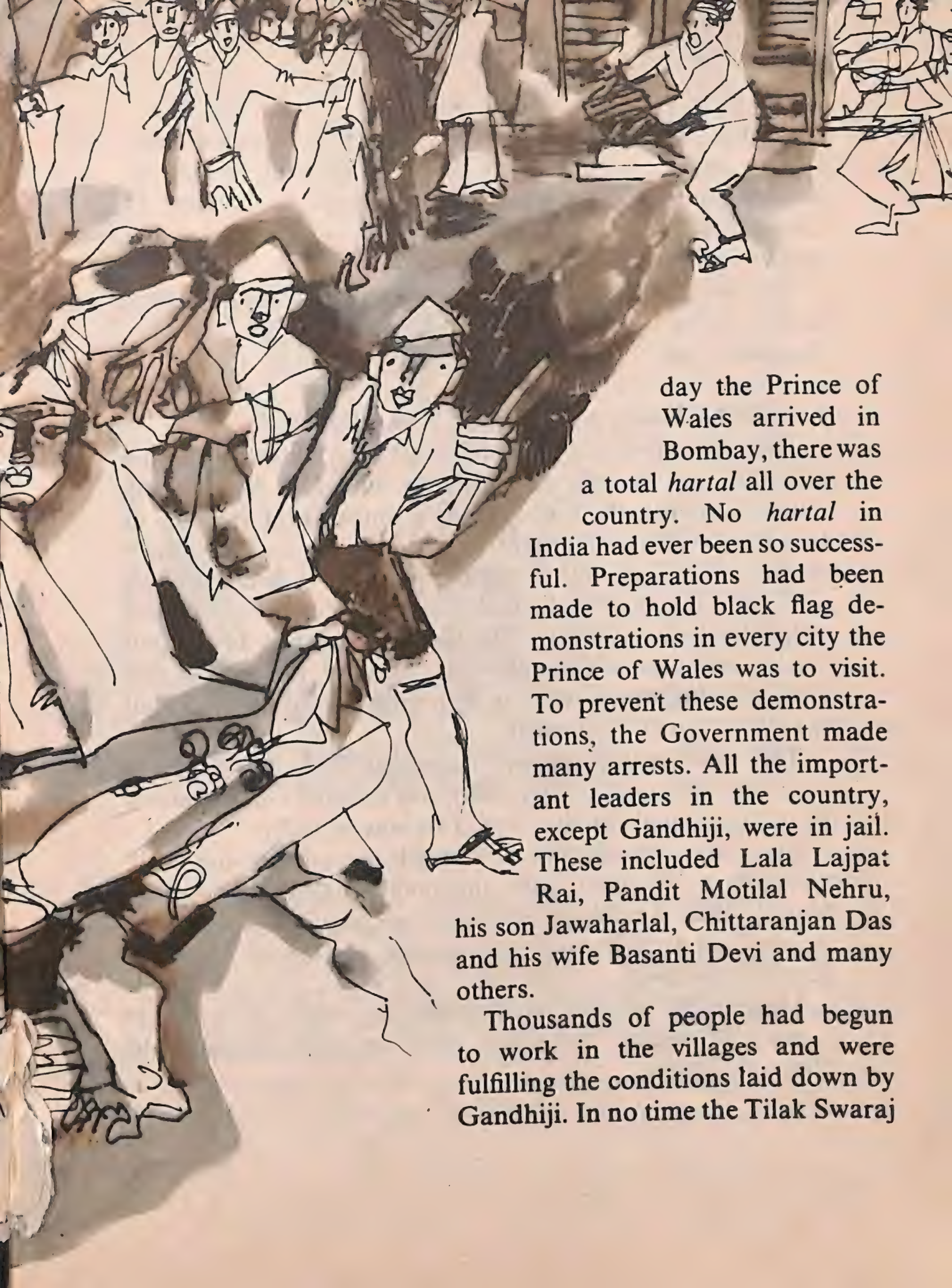
people would accept his terms. These terms were : contribution of one crore rupees to the Tilak Swaraj Fund begun in memory of Lokamanya Tilak; one crore persons to enrol themselves as members of the Congress; a minimum of twenty lakh *charkhas* to spin all over the country; the end of untouchability and lastly unity among Hindus and Muslims.

Muslims had, from the very beginning, accepted Gandhiji's leadership. But there was a special reason for this. During World War I, Turkey, along with Germany, had been defeated and in consequence had to surrender part of its territory. The Caliph of Turkey was also the religious head of the Muslims. During the war, in order to get the support of the Indian Muslims, the British had promised that the powers of the Caliph would not be curtailed. They, however, forgot their promise once the war was over. Indian Muslims, therefore, started what is known as the *Khilafat* movement in support of the Caliph. The two movements, Non-cooperation and *Khilafat*, continued side by side. The leaders of the *Khilafat* movement, Maulana Mohammad Ali and Maulana Shaukat Ali, accepted Gandhiji's leadership. A feeling of brotherhood brought together the Hindus and Muslims throughout the country. All differences were forgotten and the Muslims invited the Hindu leaders to address meetings inside their mosques.

Disappointed at this turn of events, the British Government now turned to the loyalists. The foreign rulers gave them more powers and greater privileges in order to make sure of their support. And, to encourage them further, the Prince of Wales came on a visit to India.

But this had an effect contrary to the one expected. The





day the Prince of Wales arrived in Bombay, there was a total *hartal* all over the country. No *hartal* in India had ever been so successful. Preparations had been made to hold black flag demonstrations in every city the Prince of Wales was to visit. To prevent these demonstrations, the Government made many arrests. All the important leaders in the country, except Gandhiji, were in jail. These included Lala Lajpat Rai, Pandit Motilal Nehru, his son Jawaharlal, Chittaranjan Das and his wife Basanti Devi and many others.

Thousands of people had begun to work in the villages and were fulfilling the conditions laid down by Gandhiji. In no time the Tilak Swaraj

Fund had exceeded the one-crore limit. It appeared that all the other conditions laid down by Gandhiji would be fulfilled too. Pressure was, therefore, brought to bear on Gandhiji to start a no-tax campaign by which the farmers would stop paying land revenue.

This would have hit the Government hard. The largest source of its income would have been blocked. Gandhiji decided to try out his no-tax campaign in Gujarat first.

CHAURI-CHAURA AND THE KAKORI CASE

The Government's acts of repression increased. This provoked the people to resort to violence. After many minor incidents, there was a major outbreak of violence at Chauri-Chaura in Gorakhpur district. An excited crowd set fire to a police station and burnt several policemen alive.

Gandhiji at once realised that the time for a no-tax campaign had not yet come. The Government was bent upon trying every possible means of crushing the movement, and with the people replying to repression with violence all his efforts would be a waste.

The no-tax campaign was called off. This cast a gloom over the entire country. Gandhiji was arrested and sentenced to imprisonment for six years. This was in 1922.

By now Gandhiji had discarded the clothes normally worn by a city man. Like the poor villager, he too was scantily clad. He did not have a cap or wear a *dhoti* or *kurta*. Around his waist he wore only a piece of cloth which barely reached his knees.

Dressed like this he was brought into court. And yet, as a mark of respect, everybody stood up as he stepped into the court-room.



Gandhiji in jail

In words that have since become immortal, Gandhiji addressed the court. He said :

"I know that I am playing with fire. But I am doing so deliberately, and if you let me go unpunished, I shall repeat what I have been doing. . . I know that my countrymen have at times committed insane acts. I am sorry for that. I am, therefore, not asking you to be lenient. Mr Judge, you have only two alternatives before you. Either you resign from the



office you hold, or award me the severest punishment you can."

The people felt lost with Gandhiji behind bars. They were restless and unhappy but on Gandhiji's advice, complete calm prevailed in the country. The British thought that their policy had been a success and that the people's spirit had been crushed. An Englishman went so far as to say: "After Gandhiji's imprisonment, not a dog barked." It was only later that they realised how wrong they had been.

Gandhiji had been imprisoned at the beginning of 1922. Barely two years after his imprisonment he fell seriously ill and had to be operated upon for appendicitis.

Gandhiji's illness caused great anxiety in the country. This alarmed the British Government. They knew that if Gandhiji died in jail, they would not be able to control the fury of the people.

Pandit Motilal Nehru

The operation, however, was successful and Gandhiji was released.

During Gandhiji's absence in jail, differences had arisen among the Congress leaders. C. Rajagopalachari, Vallabhbhai Patel, Rajendra Prasad and others were still working on the basis of the principles laid down by Gandhiji. But some other leaders such as Chittaranjan Das and Motilal Nehru wanted a change from the policy of non-cooperation. They felt that in order to strengthen the desire for self-rule which the Non-cooperation movement had aroused amongst the people, it was necessary to do something that would make the people conscious of their growing strength. They suggested that the coming elections to the legislatures should not be boycotted. In fact, the Congress, they felt, should contest the elections and send its representatives in large numbers to the legislatures. Those elected should oppose every Government measure and not allow the budget to be passed. They wanted to expose the hypocrisy of the Legislative Council, and to show that in fact it was the Viceroy who ruled at the Centre, just as the

Deshbandhu Chitaranjan Das

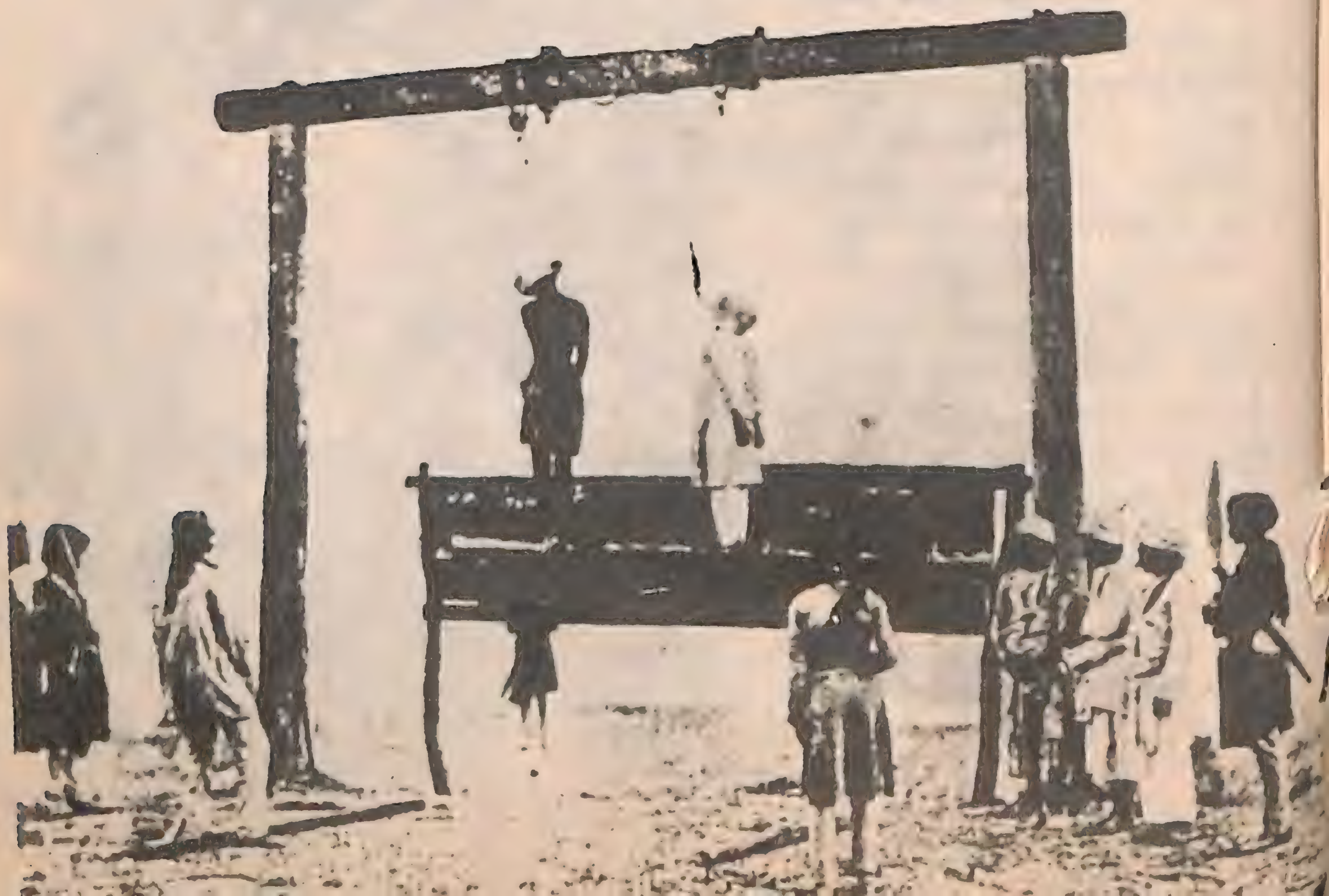


Governors ruled in the provinces.

After his release from jail, Gandhiji let the leaders of the two groups act according to their convictions. He was himself busy preparing for the next campaign. At the time few could guess what shape the campaign would take.

From the time of Gandhiji's arrest in 1922 until 1929, the freedom movement lacked a positive direction. During this period the country's leaders seemed to be pulled in different directions. Some of them formed the Swaraj Party and entered the legislatures. Others were drawn into revolutionary conspiracies. Conspiracy parties were very active in 1924-25. Intense preparations were made from Bengal to Punjab for an armed revolt all over India. In East Bengal

Revolutionaries are hanged



their leader was the well-known terrorist. Surya Sen. His followers began making bombs. They obtained funds by committing large-scale dacoities. Several British officers were murdered. It was during this period that the revolutionary Gopinath Saha was hanged for murdering an Englishman.

During 1924, the revolutionary movement gained strength in U.P., Bihar, Delhi and Punjab. One group led by Ram Prasad Bismil stole Government money from a moving train near Lucknow. Almost all those who took part in the dacoity were arrested. Their trial came to be known as the Kakori Conspiracy Case. Many of them, including Ram Prasad Bismil and Ashfaqullah Khan, were hanged. Others were sentenced to long terms of imprisonment.

Therefore, when Gandhiji came out of jail in 1924, an atmosphere of great gloom and tension prevailed in the country.

But what pained Gandhiji deeply was the fact that he saw that the Muslims were gradually moving away from the Congress. By the time the Non-cooperation movement had petered out there had been a revolution in Turkey and the leader of the revolution, Mustafa Kamal Pasha had deprived the Caliph of whatever power he had so far enjoyed. The *Khilafat* movement had, therefore, now lost all meaning for the Indian Muslims.

The British widened the rift between Hindus and Muslims further by suggesting that *Swarajya* for India would mean 'Hindu Raj' and that the Muslims would be dominated by the Hindus who were in a large majority. Many Muslim leaders left the Congress. These included not only Mohammed Ali Jinnah but also Maulana Mohammad Ali

and Maulana Shaukat Ali, popularly known as the Ali Brothers. Hindu-Muslim quarrels began to break out over small issues, and often these quarrels led to riots and bloodshed. Even after Gandhiji's release, serious Hindu-Muslim riots occurred in several places. Gandhiji had never imagined that such a thing could happen. He had found a weapon to fight the foreigner, but what weapon could he use to stop the fighting among his own people?

THE SIMON COMMISSION

At last extremely unhappy he announced that he would undertake a twenty-one day fast. He began his fast in the house of his old friend, Maulana Mohammad Ali, who had left the Congress. Gandhiji was already in poor health as a result of his last illness, and no one expected him to survive the long fast. Once again Hindus and Muslims drew together. Prayers were offered in temples and mosques for him. Leaders of all communities came to Gandhiji with the outlines of an agreement under which all communities could live together in peace.

Fortunately Gandhiji survived. As soon as the fast was over he became whole-heartedly involved in finding a way to restart *satyagraha*.

The greatest need of the hour was to extend the movement to every village so that Gandhiji's message was carried to every corner of the country. With this in view, Gandhiji started two organisations—one to spread the use of the *charkha* and *khadi*, and the other to help in the removal of untouchability. And Gandhiji began collecting funds to run these two organisations.

Between 1928 and 1929 Gandhiji toured the entire country,

travelling by third class in trains. He wanted to remove the distinction between the Untouchables and the caste-Hindus. He opened workers' ashrams in various places. Branches of the Charkha Sangh were opened in villages. Here educated young men began to live a simple and disciplined life. Village women were given *charkhas* so that they could earn some money through spinning.

Later, in 1930 and 1932, when the *satyagraha* movement was launched on a large scale, these ashram workers were very useful. Secretly printed handbills were distributed through them to the villages.

For seven years people had been using the weapon of *satyagraha* in their fight over minor issues with varying degrees of success.

In 1928, two important things happened. The Government realised that it now had no alternative but to have people's representatives in the Central Assembly and the Provincial Councils, because even the Moderates had begun to demand more powers. In collaboration with the Congress, they had submitted a Draft Constitution which was prepared by a Committee under the chairmanship of Pandit Motilal Nehru. With the exception of some Muslim leaders and a few others, this Draft was unanimously accepted.

However, before these proposals could be seriously considered, the British Government decided to send out a Parliamentary Commission to India under the chairmanship of Sir John Simon. This Commission came to be known as the Simon Commission. It had no Indian member on it and the country expressed its opposition by observing *hartals* everywhere. Wherever it went, it was greeted with black flags. No representative of the people came forward

to give evidence before the Commission. The most active among the opponents were students and young people. The Government tried to stop the demonstrations. *Lathi-charges* were made and even firing was resorted to. In Lucknow, Jawaharlal Nehru and Govind Ballabh Pant were injured. In Lahore, Lala Lajpat Rai, popularly known as the 'Lion of the Punjab', was beaten up so mercilessly that he died of his injuries a few days later. It was to avenge his death that a revolutionary, Bhagat Singh shot down Saunders, the police officer who had beaten up Lala Lajpat Rai.

Although for a few years after 1925 revolutionary activities had outwardly appeared to slacken, they had continued secretly behind the scenes. In Northern India, the leader of the revolutionaries was Chandra-shekhar Azad—the same youngster who had given himself the title 'Azad' in 1921. He had also been involved in the Kakori Conspiracy Case but had escaped from the police. Now with the brave and fearless Bhagat Singh he



Bhagat Singh

began organising a countrywide revolution. After the assassination of Saunders, the Government wreaked vengeance on the people of Punjab. To keep up the people's spirits and to gain their confidence, this revolutionary organisation decided to do something spectacular. On April 8, 1929, Bhagat Singh and Batukeshwar Dutt obtained passes to the visitors' gallery of the Central Assembly. Once in, they threw a bomb on the floor of the House. Then they fired revolvers in the air, and dropped revolutionary pamphlets into the hall. After this they gave themselves up to the police. The incident created a stir in the country. Soon afterwards the police came to know of some large bomb factories in Lahore and Saharanpur. Arrests followed

and some of those arrested gave the police information about the secret revolutionary organisation. Large-scale arrests were made. Many trials were held. The case came to be known as the Lahore Conspiracy Case.

Shortly after this, the accused in the

Batukeshwar Dutt



case went on hunger-strike in protest against the way they were being treated and the conditions in the jail. They said that since they were charged with waging war against the King, they should be treated as prisoners of war. The sympathy of the entire country was with them. Finally the Government had to give in. It accepted many of their demands. The hunger-strike lasted for about two months. One of the accused, Jatinnath Das, refused to break his fast. After a fast lasting for sixty-three days, he died in jail. With his death the atmosphere in the country was charged with tension.

The secret activities of the revolutionaries were at their height; and the country's youth even within the Congress was being drawn more and more towards a revolution.

Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhas Chandra Bose had just returned to India after a long stay in Europe. They had both been impressed by the Russian Revolution in which the people of Russia had overthrown the tyrannical Czar and had taken steps to remove the inequalities between the rich and the poor. The Russians had for the first time established a government of peasants and workers.

The next session of the Indian National Congress was held in 1929 at Calcutta. The All-Party Draft Constitution prepared under the chairmanship of Pandit Motilal Nehru, who had also been elected President of the Congress, was placed before it. But both Jawaharlal Nehru and the youth leader, Subhas Chandra Bose, refused to accept the Draft. The Draft had provided for only dominion status whereas they wanted nothing short of *Purna Swaraj* (complete independence). Ultimately Gandhiji suggested a compromise. It was decided that if the British Government did not accept the Draft Constitution prepared by them within one year,

the Congress would do all it could to achieve complete independence.

In December of the same year, the Congress met in Lahore. Young Jawaharlal was elected President. At this session, the Congress decided, amidst thunderous applause, that it would not rest until it had obtained *Purna Swaraj*.

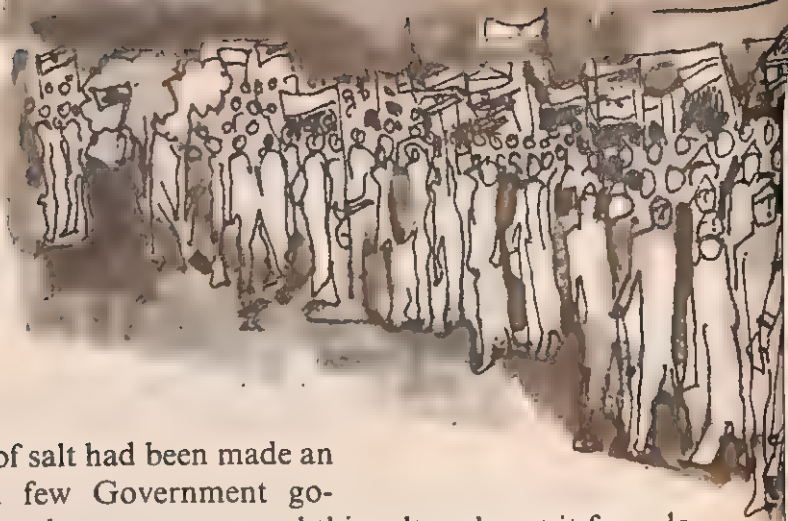
THE SALT SATYAGRAHA

January 26, 1930 was chosen as Independence Day. On that day, in every city and town, people took a pledge to work for complete independence. The Congress entrusted Gandhiji with the task of starting a *satyagraha* campaign and gave him the responsibility of leading it. The organisation and date of the campaign were left to him to decide.

Gandhiji decided to start his *satyagraha* by breaking the salt laws. This puzzled many people. What would they achieve by breaking these laws, they wondered. Those who had expected a dramatic move were disappointed. But when the salt campaign began, everyone was full of admiration at Gandhiji's shrewdness.

Gandhiji had wanted to build his campaign around some issues which concerned the poor. He wanted to draw the people's attention to the fact that millions of Indians could not afford even salt with their food. India has a long coastline and on the sea coast salt is formed. When the sea-water rises with the waxing of the moon and reaches its highest level on a full-moon night, it covers large tracts of the coast and sea-water collects in large hollows. When the moon wanes, the sea recedes. The water in the hollows dries up, leaving behind clear white salt.

Large quantities of this salt lay all along the coast but the



collection of salt had been made an offence. A few Government godowns along the sea coast stored this salt and sent it for sale to the market. But the bulk of our salt supply came from England. The reason for this was that the cargo carried by English ships, though expensive, was light in weight. It was necessary for the ships to have something heavy on board. English salt was, therefore, used as a ballast. People in India were thus forced to buy English salt, although a free supply of salt was available from the sea.

Gandhiji decided to walk to the sea coast with a few followers and break the salt laws by collecting salt. For this purpose, he chose a place called Dandi in Surat district. It meant a walk of nearly 200 miles. It was decided to cover the distance in twenty-five days, walking eight miles a day.

On March 12, 1930, the party that set out on this historic march consisted of seventy-nine people including Gandhiji. On the night before, thousands of people had started gathering along the road in front of the Sabarmati Satyagraha Ashram. In the morning, when the march began, crowds of people lined the road.

Large crowds welcomed Gandhiji in the villages that lay along the route. Women did *arti*, applied *tilak* on his forehead and offered flowers to him. During the day or at night in





Sabarmati Ashram

villages where the party stopped for food and rest, Gandhiji talked to the villagers and addressed public meetings.

On April 5, the party reached Dandi. The next day, April 6, was the day of *satyagraha*. On that day Gandhiji and his entire party took a bath in the sea and collected salt-water. This was then heated and about five grams of salt obtained. This salt was auctioned at a meeting. A



businessman from Ahmedabad paid Rs. 525 for the five grams of salt.

By breaking the salt laws, Gandhiji had opened the way for everyone to offer *satyagraha*. Thousands of men and women began to break the salt laws. The police once again resorted to violence.

All over the country people were arrested and beaten up. But the Government had so far not dared to arrest Gandhiji. Gandhiji now took another decision. He announced that he and his followers would raid the Government salt godown at Dharasana from where salt was sent to the markets.

The Government's hands were thus forced. Before the raid could take place, Gandhiji was arrested.

After Gandhiji the leadership of the Salt Satyagraha party passed to Abbas Tyabji and on his arrest to Sarojini Naidu, a well-known Indian poet who wrote in English. She belonged to a distinguished family and was a great patriot.

Newspapers throughout the country carried reports that armed police had stopped Sarojini Naidu and her party in

front of the Government salt godown at Dharasana. In the heat of May, she was made to sit on the burning sands without food or water all day long.

Finally, she was arrested. But for weeks, batches of *satyagrahis* continued to make attempts to raid the godown. Mounted police charged, and *lathis* rained on their heads. Many *satyagrahis* were seriously injured and, wounded and bleeding, they were put in jail.

THE GANDHI-IRWIN PACT

The number of *satyagrahis*, however, did not decline. In addition to breaking the salt laws, foreign cloth shops and liquor shops also were picketed. The youth of India was full of enthusiasm and patriotic fervour. Thousands went to jail, hundreds had their property confiscated, many died and innumerable people were wounded.

A special feature of the movement was the participation of women throughout India. In Gujarat particularly, Gandhiji's Dandi March had roused great enthusiasm among the women and a large number of them joined the march and even went to jail. In spite of the prevalence of *purdah* in North India, particularly in Bihar and U.P., hundreds of women joined the movement.

Summer was over; then came the rains, and then winter. But the *satyagraha* battle continued unabated. In Gujarat, a powerful no-tax movement had been started by the farmers of Bardoli and Khera taluks. In U.P. and some provinces, farmers began preparing for a no-tax campaign.

The Government got panicky. By the end of January 1931, the Viceroy, Lord Irwin, released all prominent Congress leaders and began negotiations for a settlement.



Round Table Conference

Lord Irwin and Gandhiji had a series of talks. Ultimately in March 1931, the Gandhi-Irwin Pact was signed. Both sides made concessions. The Congress agreed to attend the Round Table Conference in London and promised to suspend the *satyagraha* movement till then. The Government, on its part, released all those who had been arrested and announced that people could collect salt from the sea coast for their personal use.

At that time Englishmen were of two divergent views : those whom the success of Gandhiji's *satyagraha* movement had convinced that India would have to be given independence and those who still hoped that by strong arm methods and by the creation of differences among the various communities.

India could be kept in subjection for a long time to come. Most British officials in India belonged to the second category. They tried to wreck the Pact. Using various pretexts they tried to provoke the people into rebellion.

In England too, the Government was dominated by men who wanted to place every obstacle in India's path to freedom. Those invited to the Round Table Conference were mostly supporters of the British rule in India. Representatives of different religious groups were invited too—representatives not only of the Christians, Sikhs and Muslims but also of the Untouchables. This was done to create the impression that the Congress represented only the caste Hindus.

As a result, the Congress and Gandhiji began to feel that going to London would serve no purpose.

Then the British Government relented a little. It announced that at the Conference nothing would be decided by a majority vote. It was inviting people of all shades of opinion only to get to know their views. The Congress finally decided to attend the Conference and to send Gandhiji as its sole representative. But the Round Table Conference was a

Central Jail, Yarvada



complete failure. As soon as Gandhiji reached Bombay after attending the Conference, he was again arrested. Other Congress leaders were also arrested. By then a new Viceroy, Lord Willingdon, had replaced Lord Irwin.

PROVINCIAL AUTONOMY AND WORLD WAR II

Once again all national organisations were banned. All Congress committees were declared illegal. Large sums were demanded as security from nationalist newspapers and when they could not pay, they were compelled to close down. In some presses owned by nationalists, Congress bulletins were secretly printed. These were distributed in villages through *Charkha Sanghs* and ashrams.

Then the British Prime Minister announced the Communal Award. According to this Award, the Untouchables were to be treated as a group separate from the Hindus and were to have the right to elect their own representatives when the elections took place.

Gandhiji heard of this decision in jail. He had already warned the British that if such a decision was taken, he would stake his life to undo it. He immediately began a fast.

The fast began on September 20, 1932. On that day millions of people in the country fasted in sympathy with Gandhiji and prayed for his life. This fast helped to clear the differences between the caste Hindus and the leaders of the Untouchables. In Gandhiji's presence, the leaders signed an agreement and demanded the cancellation of the British Government's decision. Under the leadership of Gandhiji, the caste Hindus began a campaign for the removal of untouchability. The Government modified their decision and Gandhiji's life was saved. Gandhiji called the Untouch-

ables, Harijans, that is 'the people of God'. He also changed the names of his English, Hindi and Gujarati papers and called them 'Harijan'. That was not all. He converted his Sabarmati Ashram into an ashram for the workers in the Harijan movement.

Many of the *satyagrahis* joined the Harijan movement. Some were still in favour of continuing with *satyagraha* and, therefore, on Gandhiji's advice, group-satyagraha was abandoned but those who wished to continue *satyagraha* were allowed to do so individually. Meanwhile, elections to the Central Assembly were announced. The Congress decided to contest the elections.

In 1935, the British Government announced a new constitutional scheme for India. On the basis of this, fresh elections were held in all the provinces in early 1937. In these elections, the Congress secured large majorities in all those provinces where the Hindus were in a majority. In the North-West Frontier Province too, where the population consisted mainly of Muslims, the Congress secured a majority.

One of the leaders of Gandhiji's non-violent *satyagraha* was Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan. Although a Pathan, he proved to be among the most prominent supporters of Gandhiji in his non-violent campaign, and came to be known as the Frontier Gandhi. He organised a non-violent movement among the Pathans in Peshawar in 1930 and called them Khudai Khidmatgars. The country watched with amazement as, without protest or attempt to defend themselves, the strong warlike Pathans let *lathis* rain on them. The Government's brutality exceeded all bounds. A contingent of Garhwali soldiers was court-martialled when they refused to fire on the brave, unarmed Pathan *satyagrahis*.

The Congress decided not to form governments in the provinces unless the British Government gave them an assurance that it would not interfere with the decisions they reached.

The British Government realised that if the Congress did not form governments, there would be more trouble. The Viceroy and Gandhiji tried to reach a solution but the Government was unwilling to give the assurances demanded by the Congress. It even tried to get some minority parties to form Ministries. The Congress rejected all legislation brought forward by these minority governments.

Ultimately the Viceroy accepted the Congress demand. The British Government was compelled to grant virtual Provincial Autonomy. Congress Ministries were formed in most of the provinces.

Provincial Autonomy lasted only three years. Then the country had to face another ordeal. World War II broke out, and without consulting the elected representatives of the people, England declared that India would join the war and fight on her side against Germany.

This was an insult to the country. Following instructions



Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan

from the Congress, all the Congress Ministries resigned.

In England, the then Prime Minister, Winston Churchill was against giving independence to India. Under pressure from President Roosevelt of the U.S.A., he did eventually send out Sir Stafford Cripps with some proposals for constitutional reforms. The negotiations between him and the Congress, however, ended in failure. In 1942, therefore, the Congress found itself with no alternative but to start once again a countrywide *satyagraha*. Gandhiji asked the British to leave India. The country would look after its own defence, he said. And if Japan attacked India, he added, it would do so only because the British had made India one of their military strongholds.

Here it is necessary to mention Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. While under house-arrest after the outbreak of the war, he cleverly escaped and sometime later his voice was heard on Berlin radio. Subhas Chandra Bose stayed in Germany for a while, then he moved to Italy and finally arrived in Japan. Here he tried to organise the liberation of India with the help of the Japanese.

THE INDIAN NATIONAL ARMY AND THE QUIT INDIA MOVEMENT

From among the Indian prisoners of war in Japanese hands, Subhas Chandra Bose formed the Indian National Army and became its Commander-in-Chief. The members of this army called him Netaji. It was at this time that the slogan 'Jai Hind' became popular.

Thus, in 1942, in his broadcasts from Tokyo, Netaji gave an assurance to the people of India that Japan would help them to drive the British out and at the same time, Gandhiji

raised the 'Quit India' slogan against the British.

British troops had already received instructions that they should be prepared to retreat from Assam, Bengal and Bihar if the Japanese threat to India became serious. The Congress came to know that the retreating British army was planning to destroy all important factories, railways and bridges so that they might not fall into Japanese hands. Gandhiji opposed this decision. He said that the British had no right to destroy valuable Indian property.

Finally there was an open conflict between the Congress and the Government in August 1942. Gandhiji asked the people to do their best to drive out the British for the British were determined to endanger the entire nation. At the Congress session at Bombay, the famous 'Quit India' resolution was passed asking Britain to transfer power to India and leave immediately. This was the beginning of the most intense and widespread revolt the country had ever known.

As soon as Gandhiji gave the word, the battle between the people and the Government began. All the Congress leaders were jailed. Without their leaders the people—students, workers and farmers, men and women, boys and girls—took the law into their own hands and began destroying rail tracks, telegraph poles, roads and bridges. The police and the army opened fire and many brave young fighters died.

Thousands were killed. In retaliation, the people set fire to several police stations. Rioting broke out all over the country. Trains could not run as railway lines had been destroyed in many places. Roads had been damaged and many small bridges destroyed. The movement of troops was held up for many days. Army jeeps and trucks were



Subhas Chandra Bose

stranded. It took the British many months to repair the damage.

Those arrested during this period were severely tortured in jail. This was done to extract information about their colleagues who had gone underground. Jāyaprakash

Narayan, who had escaped from a Bihar jail, was rearrested and placed in a Lahore prison. He was made to sit on a block of ice for hours and for many nights was not allowed to sleep.

By the end of 1942, over 60,000 men and women had been arrested. The Government desperately needed the cooperation of the Indian people but its own rigid policies prevented it from getting any support from the Indians.

In Europe, the days of the German victories were over. Germany was now reeling under the blows dealt to its forces by Russia. With the help of the Americans, a second front in the West had been opened. In the East meanwhile, Japan's advance was being stopped.

Gandhiji was released from jail. Soon afterwards other leaders were also released. The Government resumed its efforts to gain their support. But now the leaders were not prepared to come to terms on anything less than complete independence.

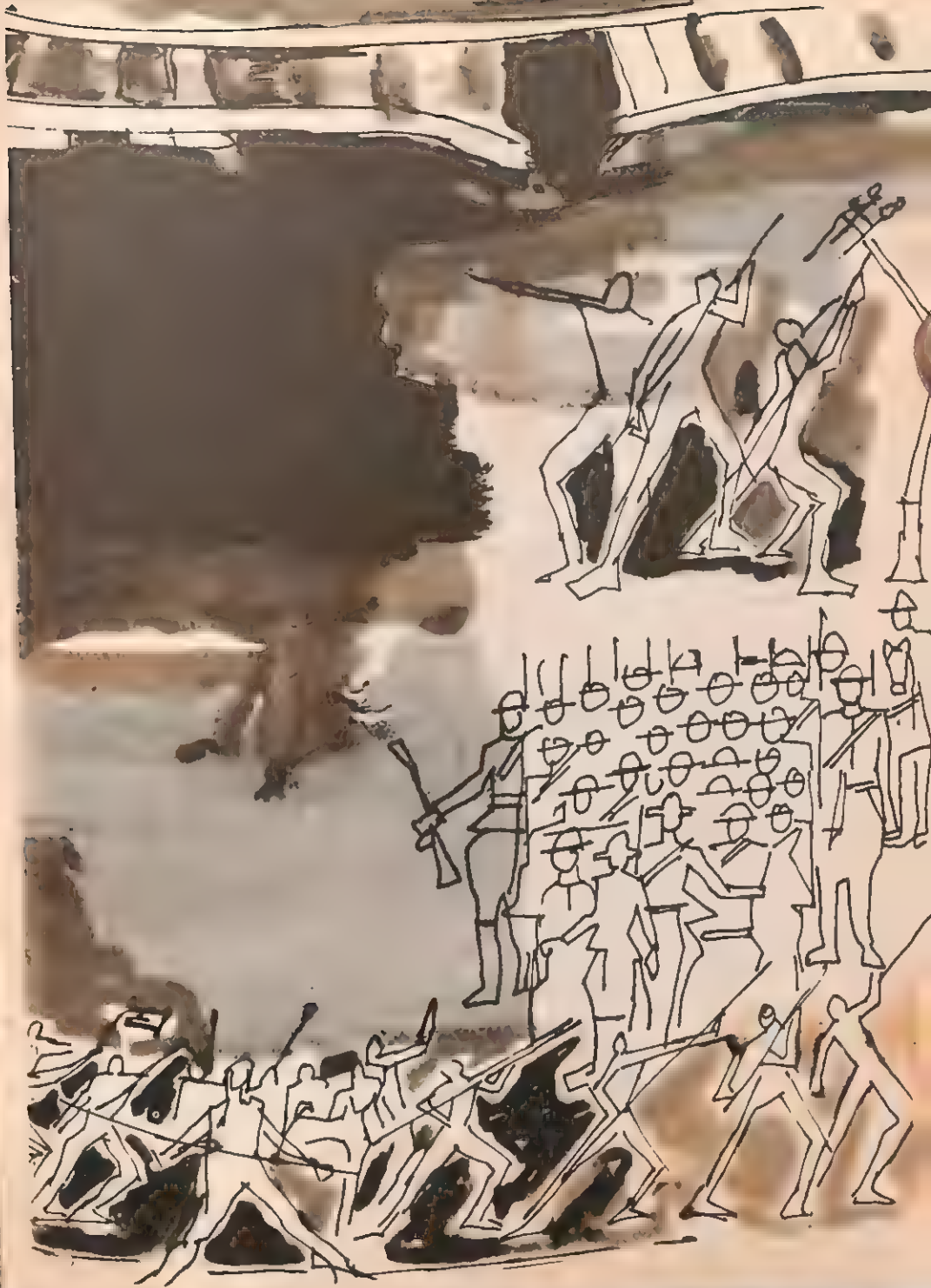
In 1945. World War II came to an end. Prior to this, the Japanese had begun losing ground on India's eastern frontier. Many members of Subhas Chandra Bose's Indian National Army were captured and brought to India. Some were tried for treason. Then came the sad news of Subhas Chandra Bose's death in an air crash. The country was filled with grief.

The trial of three INA officers—General Shah Nawaz, Colonel Sehgal and Major Dhillon—began in the Red Fort at Delhi. The attention of the whole nation was focused on them. Some of the most eminent lawyers in the country took up their defence. Jawaharlal Nehru joined the team of defending lawyers.

The press gave wide publicity to the proceedings of the



1942, The Quit India
Movement



trial. Netaji's bravery and courage were revealed during the proceedings and the people's admiration was roused. His birth anniversary in January 1946 was celebrated with great enthusiasm, particularly in Calcutta. Many people refused to believe that Bose was dead. The three officers on trial at the Red Ford became national heroes.

The court sentenced the INA leaders to long terms of imprisonment. Fear of the people's reaction, however, made the Government release them. There were processions in their honour all over the country.

'Jai Hind', Netaji's slogan, became popular throughout India.

Once again the spirit of violence and revolution predominated. In towns like Calcutta, it became impossible for Englishmen to go out on the streets. Jeeps belonging to the police and the army were stopped and set on fire. The people seemed to have lost all fear of the army. Even young children were no longer afraid of taunting soldiers on sentry duty.

The spirit of defiance was so prevalent that even in the Indian Defence Forces there were signs of rebellion. In fact, in February 1946, some Indian personnel of the Navy mutinied and refused to take orders from their British officers. A *hartal* was observed in Bombay in sympathy with the mutineers, and Government buildings and other property were damaged. The police opened fire and more than 200 people were killed. Had Sardar Patel not intervened, many more lives might have been lost.

After the end of World War II, there was a general election in England. The Conservative party led by Churchill was defeated and the Labour Party was victorious. A socialist government headed by Clement Attlee took office. In India,

Provincial Autonomy was reintroduced and fresh elections to the Provincial legislatures held. The Congress formed Ministries in all the provinces where it had held office before. The British Government was now aware that the people of India would not be satisfied by half-way measures. Under these conditions, undue delay might turn India into an enemy of Britain's for ever.

THE CABINET MISSION

Three members of the British Cabinet were sent to India to prepare the outlines of a constitution for free India. But the British policy of divide and rule had borne fruit and now the situation was beyond anyone's control. The differences between the Hindus and the Muslims could no longer be resolved.

The Cabinet Mission was sent to India in order to find a way out of the difficulty into which the British Government had landed itself after World War II. But when the Mission arrived it was faced with Jinnah's obstinate demand that if India was not to be divided, there should be an equal number of Hindu and Muslim Ministers in the Central Cabinet and all the Muslim Ministers should be representatives of the Muslim League. In other words, they were to be Jinnah's nominees.

How could the Congress accept this demand? It was not prepared to represent Hindus only, nor could it let down those Muslims who had stood by it all along.

The efforts of the three members of the Cabinet Mission proved fruitless. They were not able to change Jinnah's mind.

The British Government decided to establish a Constituent Assembly to frame a constitution for India. It also decided



Sir Stafford Cripps and Gandhiji

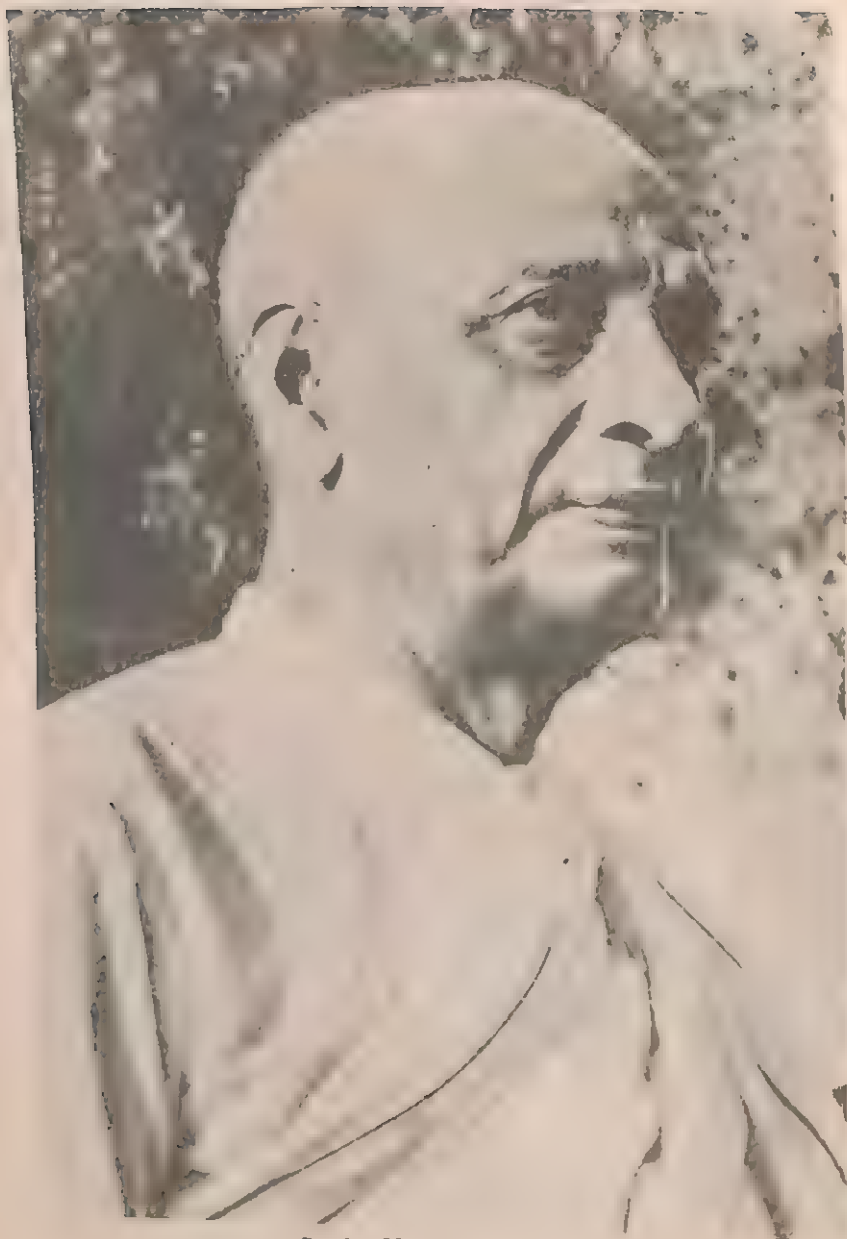
that, until the Constituent Assembly had completed its task, the Viceroy would be assisted by an Executive Council representing the main parties in the country.

The Congress accepted this decision. But Jinnah remained adamant. Moreover, when he realised that the British might leave India without meeting his demands in full, he called on the Muslims of India to observe August 16, 1946 as Direct Action Day. The Direct Action was not really against the British, but against the Congress. This led to the great Calcutta killing which, in turn, led to Hindu-Muslim riots throughout the country.

All the efforts made by Gandhiji and the Congress over the years towards the establishment of Hindu-Muslim unity were wiped out in a single day.

Hindu-Muslim disturbances spread like wild fire. The terrible killing in Calcutta was followed by Hindus being massacred in districts of Bengal, such as Dacca and Noakhali, where the Muslims were in a majority. A similar massacre of Muslims followed in Bihar where there was a Hindu majority. Jinnah stayed aloof. Only Gandhiji and Congress leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru and Rajendra Prasad tried to do their utmost to save the Muslims.

The Viceroy, Lord Wavell, faced with Jinnah's lack of cooperation, announced the names of the members of his Executive Council on the advice of the Congress alone. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru became its Vice-President, other Congress leaders like Sardar Patel, Dr Rajendra Prasad and Rajagopalachari also joined the Council. Finding that none of his proposals was accepted, Jinnah at last relented. Some changes were made in the Executive Council and a few Muslim League members were included in it.



Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

Jinnah now adopted a new strategy. He advised the Muslim League Executive Councillors not to accept Nehru's proposals and not to carry out the majority decisions of the Executive Council. The Finance Department was under a Muslim League member, Liaquat Ali Khan, and all Government expenditure had to be sanctioned by him. He rejected all the demands for grants made by the Congress members. This brought their work to a standstill. The Muslim League representatives also stayed away from meetings of the Constituent Assembly held under the presidentship of Dr Rajendra Prasad.

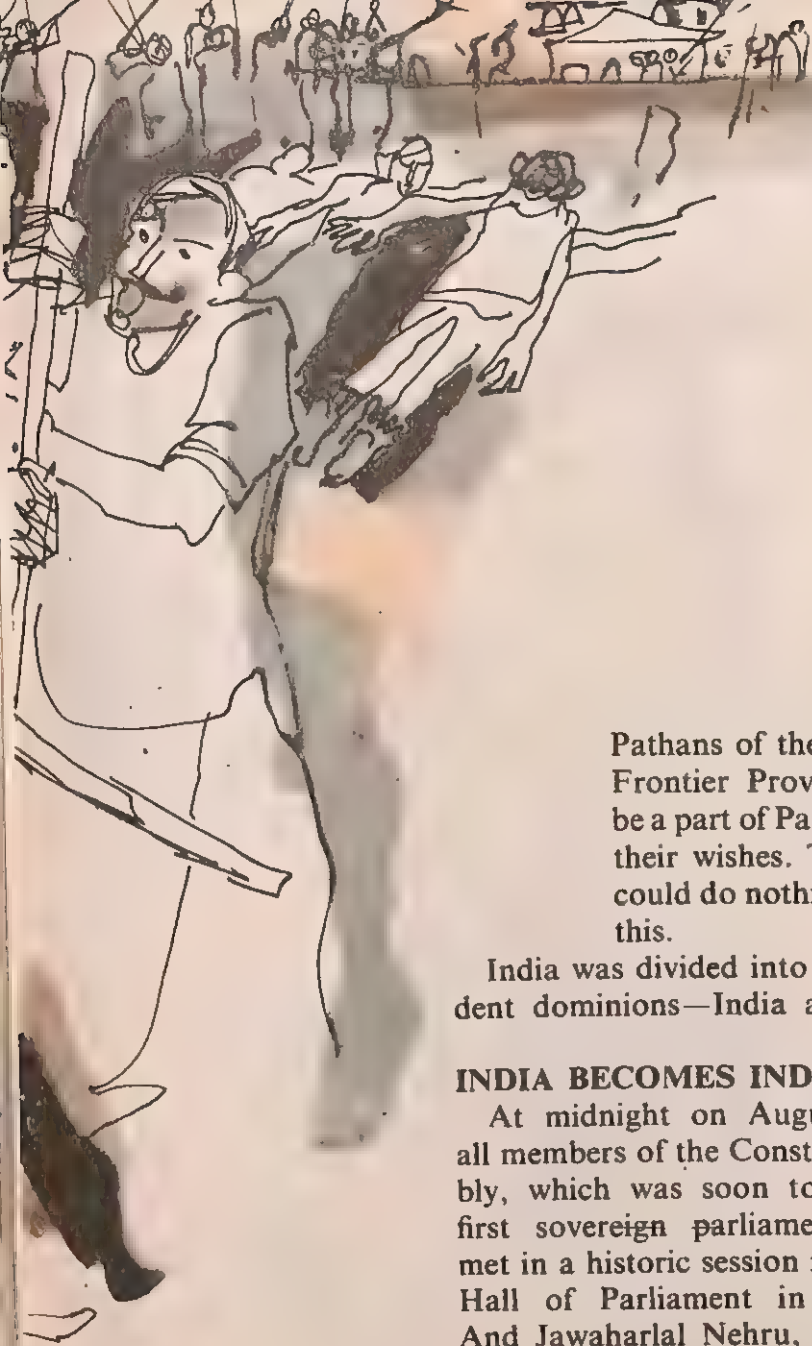
Jawaharlal Nehru explained this to the Viceroy and to the British Prime Minister. He threatened to resign for without the cooperation of the Muslim League, all his work was coming to nothing.

Lord Wavell was replaced by Lord Mountbatten. And an announcement was made that the British had decided to leave India within a specified period. In accordance with the proposals put forward by Lord Mountbatten, it was decided to divide India into two separate dominions; then the British would leave. The Congress accepted the decision with great reluctance. The idea of partitioning the country grieved the entire nation. Gandhiji's dream of a united India in which Hindus and Muslims lived like brothers was shattered. Even Jinnah did not get what he wanted. The Pakistan he got—two fragments separated by Indian territory—was something he had not bargained for.

This was a bitter moment for the Congress, but because of the wide gulf that now existed between the Hindus and the Muslims, it had no choice but to accept the partition.

But what really upset the Congress was the fact that the





Pathans of the North-West Frontier Province were to be a part of Pakistan against their wishes. The Congress could do nothing to prevent this.

India was divided into two independent dominions—India and Pakistan.

INDIA BECOMES INDEPENDENT

At midnight on August 14, 1947, all members of the Constituent Assembly, which was soon to become the first sovereign parliament of India, met in a historic session in the Central Hall of Parliament in New Delhi. And Jawaharlal Nehru, India's Prime



Lord and Lady Mountbatten with Gandhiji

Minister-designate made his memorable speech. He began :
"Long years ago we made a tryst with destiny, and now the time comes when we shall redeem our pledge, not wholly or in full measure, but very substantially."

At the stroke of the midnight hour when the world sleeps, India will awake to life and freedom. A moment comes, which comes but rarely in history, when he step out from the old to the new, when an age ends, and when the soul of a nation, long suppressed, finds utterance. It is fitting that at this solemn moment we take the pledge of dedication to the service of India and her people and to the still larger cause of humanity.

At the stroke of midnight, all members of the Constituent Assembly stood up and pledged themselves to the service of India and her people.

India was free.

Early on the morning of August 15, 1947, Jawaharlal Nehru, India's first Prime Minister, hoisted the Indian tricolour on the Red Fort. Then, from the ramparts of the Red Fort, he addressed the millions of people who had gathered to celebrate the coming of Independence.

There was rejoicing throughout the country. But in the midst of this joy there was great sorrow. Gandhiji was not with them to share their happiness. He was far away in Noakhali comforting the victims of the riots. Gandhiji had vowed to devote himself to creating friendship and love between the Hindus and the Muslims of India and Pakistan. And a few months later, on January 30, 1948, when Gandhiji was on his way to conduct the evening prayers in Birla House, where he was staying, he was shot dead.

It was a critical moment for India. We had just achieved



Rajagopalachari—India's last Governor-General

independence when we were deprived of our beloved leader, Gandhiji. The country was filled with sorrow and despair. But the other leaders met the challenge with courage.

The Constituent Assembly set to work to prepare a new constitution for India. And Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel worked hard to ensure that all the Princely States were made a part of the Indian Union. By the time the new constitution was ready, India was an integrated unit under one Government.

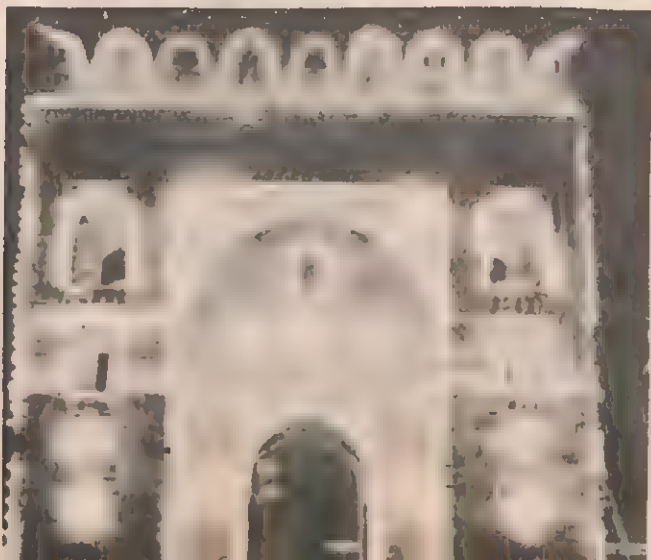
The new constitution came into force on January 26, 1950 and India became a Sovereign Democratic Republic. Dr Rajendra Prasad became the first President of the Republic of India. Jawaharlal Nehru continued as Prime Minister.

Independent India had now to choose its national symbols.

The Emblem

As the State Emblem it chose a replica of the Lion Capital

Gateway of India of Independence Day





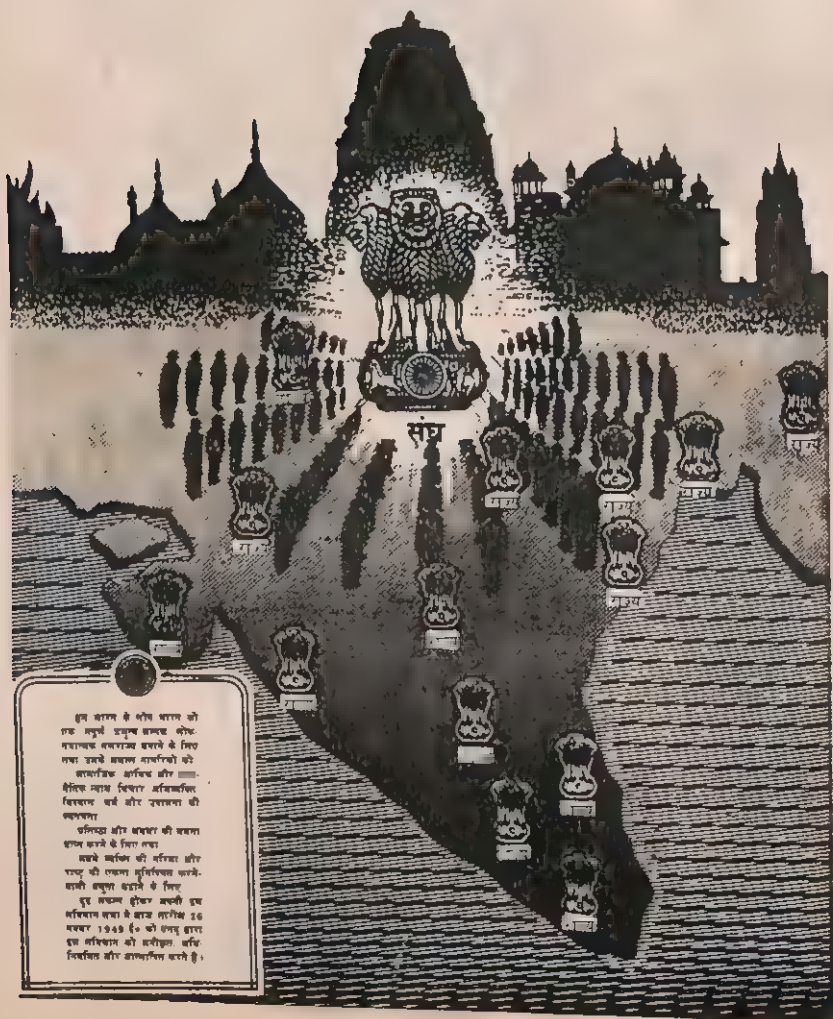
of the Asoka Pillar in which four lions are sitting with their backs to one another. In the emblem, however, only



गुरुदेव प्रसाद

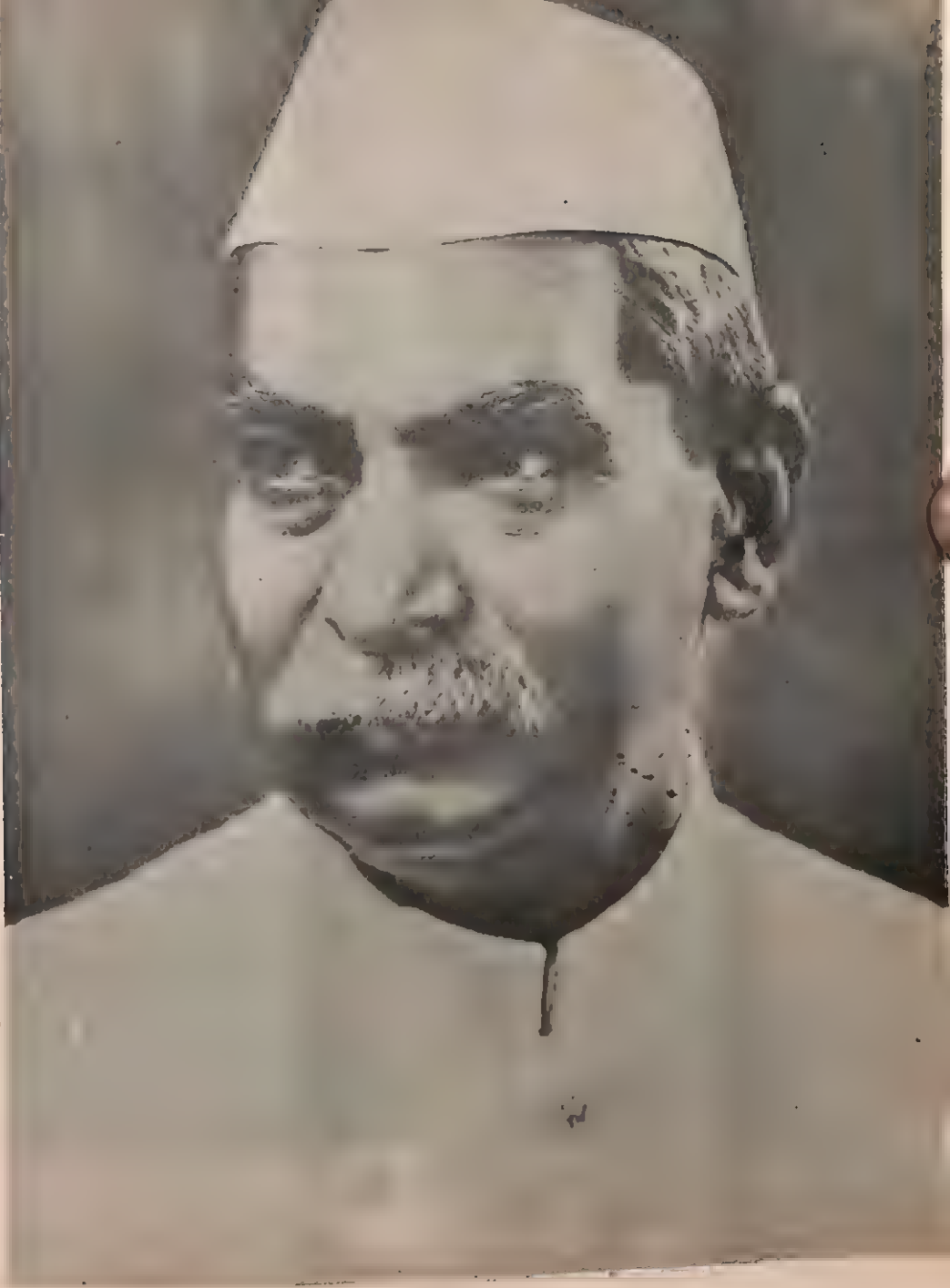
The Republic of India

Federal and Secular

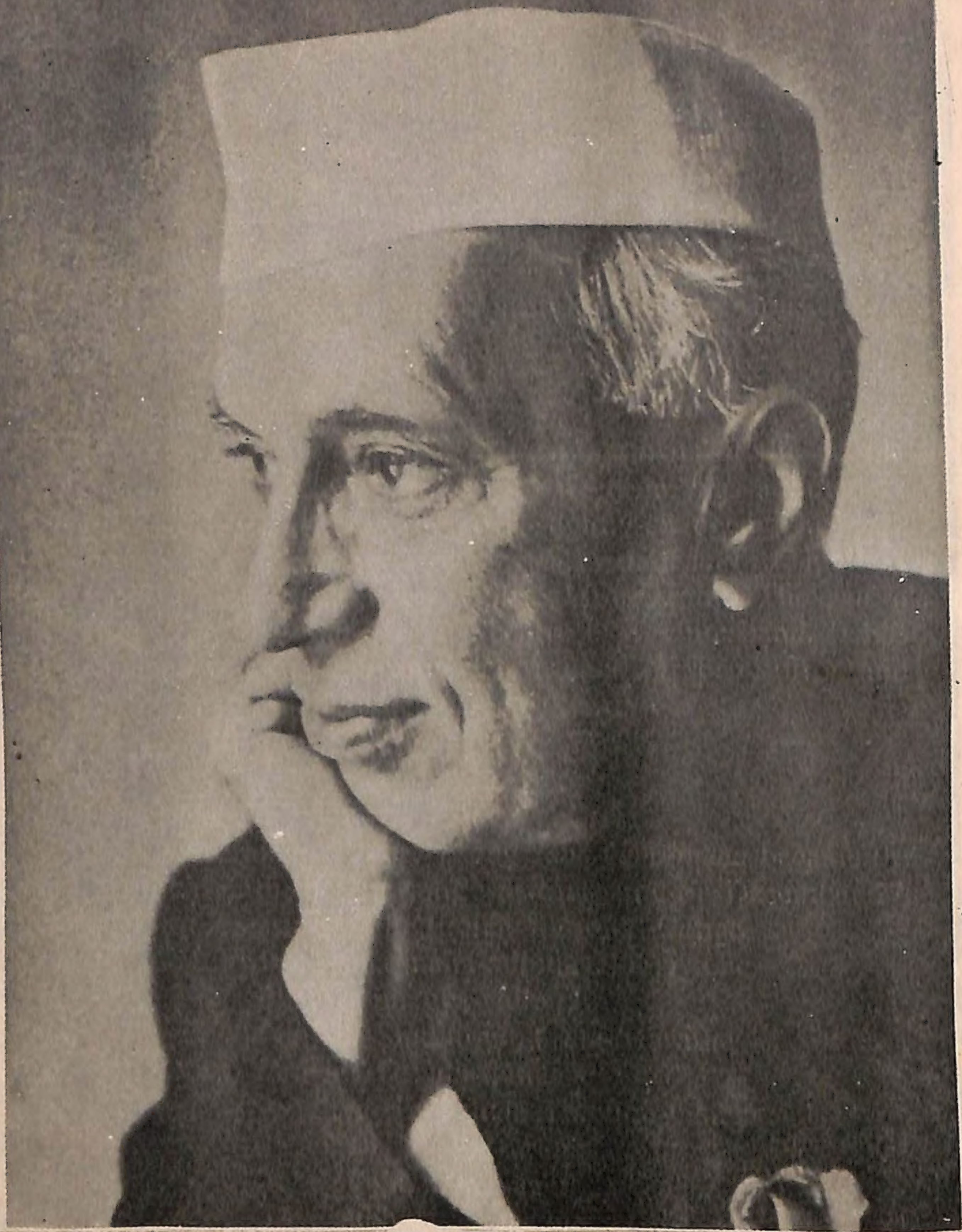


हम भारत के लोक शासन को
एक नए अनुभव के रूप में देखते हैं।
समाजवाद, समाजवाद, समाजवाद के लिए
हमारे समाज के लिए।
समाजवाद, समाजवाद, समाजवाद के लिए।
समाजवाद, समाजवाद, समाजवाद के लिए।

संविधान और समाज की वकालत
हमारे समाज के लिए।
समाजवाद, समाजवाद, समाजवाद के लिए।
समाजवाद, समाजवाद, समाजवाद के लिए।
समाजवाद, समाजवाद, समाजवाद के लिए।



Dr. Rajendra Prasad



Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru

three lions are seen. The Pillar had been erected by Emperor Asoka at Sarnath at the place where the Buddha had delivered his first sermon to his disciples. In the centre is a wheel. Below it in the Devanagari script is the inscription 'Satyamev Jayate'. The words mean 'Truth alone is victorious'.

The Flag

The tricolour, which kept up the spirits of the people throughout the long struggle for freedom, was adopted as the national flag. Its design was slightly changed. The *charkha* was replaced by Asoka's Wheel or *Chakra*. This was taken from the carving of Asoka's Lion Capital. The *chakra* is a deep blue and is in the centre of a white band. It has twenty-four spokes. Above it is a band of deep saffron and below it is a band of deep green.

The Song

Rabindranath Tagore's song *Jana-gana-mana* became the national anthem. The song was first sung on December 27, 1911 at a session of the Indian National Congress.

Jana-gana-mana-adhinayaka jaya he
Bharata-bhagya-vidhata.
Punjaba-Sindhu-Gujarata-Maratha
Dravida-Utkala-Banga
Vindhya-Himachala-Yamuna-Ganga-
Uchchala-jaladhi-taranga
Tava subha name jage
Tava subha asisa mange
Gahe tava jaya-gatha.

Jana-gana-mangala-dayaka jaya he
Bharata-bhagya-vidhata
Jaya he, jaya he, jaya he
Jaya, jaya, jaya, jaya he.

